



## **HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 7, 2008

Contact: HFD Public Information, 713-495-7906

### **It's Time to Change Your Clock, Change Your Battery!**

The Houston Fire Department reminds citizens that when they set their clocks back this weekend, to check the batteries in their smoke alarms.

Working smoke alarms nearly cut in half the risk of dying in a home fire. Changing smoke detector batteries at least once a year is one of the simplest, most effective ways to reduce these tragic deaths and injuries due to no smoke alarm or a non—working smoke alarm, according to Captain Beda Kent, HFD Public Affairs.

“Working smoke detectors provide an early warning and critical extra seconds to escape,” said Captain Kent. “This is particularly important for those most at risk of dying in a home fire, such as children and seniors.”

Non-working smoke detectors rob residents of the protective benefits home fire safety devices were designed to provide. The most commonly cited cause of non-working smoke detectors is worn or missing batteries.

In 2007, more than half of the homes that involved fatal fires in Houston did not have smoke alarm present and of those homes that did have an alarm, most were not working.

Besides reminding citizens that they need to check and change their batteries, the fire department recommends citizens replace their smoke alarms at least every ten years, and for location, recommend:

- Wall Mount- place 4-12 inches from ceiling, Ceiling Mount- place at least 4 inches from any wall, High Pitch Ceilings- place 3 feet from highest point
- Place at least 1 detector on each level (1 outside each sleeping area)
- Test the detector every month, vacuum the vents of the detector at least once a year, don't paint over the alarm, always follow manufacturers instructions

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The HFD works year-round to spread the word of the importance of working smoke alarms by canvassing areas that see more residential home fires and areas of fatal fires. The next massive installation effort will be on Saturday, March 29, 2008, in the neighborhood around Fire Station 5, 2020 Hollister.

HFD will also be hosting an open house at Fire Station 25, Saturday, March 8, 2008, from 10 am to 1pm for citizens to learn more about fire prevention, meet their local firefighters, see a fire truck up-close, tour the fire station and receive free fire safety literature and smoke detectors. There will be balloons and other things for children, Captain Elmo – The Fire Safety Robot, and the opportunity to take a picture of your child on a fire truck.

For more information about smoke alarms and to find out about the HFD program that helps residents who cannot afford or otherwise install a smoke alarm, citizens may visit the HFD website at [www.houstonfire.com](http://www.houstonfire.com) or call the HFD Public Affairs Office at 713-495-7900.